



Becoming

An Introduction to Jung's
Concept of Individuation

Deldon Anne McNeely

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Preface

Becoming reflects my hope to leave my grandchildren and others of their generation an understanding of the ideas of Carl Gustav Jung. His idea of a process called individuation has sustained my dedication to my lifelong work of psychoanalysis, and it saddens me that the principles that guided me have been dismissed by the current trends in psychology and psychiatry.

We psychotherapists know the value of Jung's approach through clinical results, that is, watching people enlarge their consciousness and change their attitudes and behavior, transforming their suffering into psychological well-being.

Psychology's fascination with behavioral techniques, made necessary by financial concerns and promoted by insurance companies and pharmaceutical companies, has changed the nature of psychotherapy and has attempted to dismiss the wisdom of Jung and other pioneers of the territory of the unconscious mind. We psychoanalysts have played a part in the loss by not transmitting our message clearly. For a combination of unfortunate circumstances, many of the younger generation, including college and medical students, are deprived of fully understanding their own minds. Those with a scientific bent are sometimes turned away from self-reflection by the suggestion that unconscious processes are metaphysical mumbo-jumbo. Superficial assessments of Jung have led to the incorrect conclusion that one must be a spiritual seeker, or religious, in order to follow Jung's ideas about personality. I would like to correct that impression.

Some university professors tell me that they are not allowed to teach Jungian psychology. Secular humanism and positivism have shaped the academic worldview; therefore, investigation into the unknown or unfamiliar dimensions of human experience is not valued. But this attitude contrasts with the positive reputation Jung enjoys among therapists, artists of all types, and philosophers. Those without resistance to the unconscious because of their creativity, open-mindedness, or personal disposition are more likely to receive Jung's explorations without prejudice or ideological resistance. There is a lively conversation going on about Jung's ideas in journals and conferences among diverse groups of thinkers which does not reach mainstream psychology.

Becoming is for those whose minds are receptive to the unknown, and I hope it will help some of us to think—more with respect than dread—of the possibility that we act unconsciously.

In organizing this book, I wanted to prepare for understanding “individuation” by identifying the historical and philosophical contexts in which Jung was situated, and then addressing the question of where this approach fits with the cultural issues of today. If we were reading this as a play, Part I would set the stage and introduce the main characters. Part II describes the action of individuation as it presents itself on the current cultural stage. Part III is like director’s notes for those who have curiosity for more discussion; it amplifies the basic ideas in each chapter and is called “Lagniappe.” This term, common in Louisiana, means you will get a little something extra, like a thirteenth donut when buying a dozen. It is not necessary to read Part III in order to understand why I find the concept of individuation important for each of us, but it is a little something extra that some may enjoy.

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Part 1

Introduction



A Question of Principle

I inquire, I do not assert; I do not here determine anything with final assurance; I conjecture, try, compare, attempt, ask...

(This comment by an alchemist, quoted by C.G. Jung in volume 16 of his *Collected Works*, captures the spirit of Jung's work and also of this project.)

Is there a principle of order operating throughout the universe, or are we all embedded in chaos? A pioneer in psychoanalysis, psychiatrist C.G. Jung, did not claim to have proof that there was such a principle, but he observed that, no matter what they believe, humans *behave* as if such a principle exists, and have done so throughout history and throughout all cultures.

Jung found that the *idea* of an ordering principle occurred in all cultures and that human behavior reflected an assumption of such a principle. He called that idea the "Self." He noted that as the body operates as a unit organizing a number of systems, so the psychic functions are organized by a unifying force. He proposed that our psychological life's work—becoming an integrated person, our "individuation"—is to learn how that principle of order manifests in us, to become more familiar with this Self that seems to influence our behavior. This principle or force has been known as the inner voice, a higher power, the dream-maker, the greater self, the mysterious "other" in our personality, the divine spark, the beloved, or destiny; but whatever it is called, many people recognize that something within them beyond their ordinary plans for themselves influences their lives.

Throughout this paper I will capitalize "Self" to distinguish it from the commonplace meaning of "self" that denotes a particular personality organization, as in "myself." "Self" with capital "S" is not an idea about something that is just personal. "Self" as Jung uses it has compli-

cated implications. We can think of it as the principle that gives organization and unity to our personality. But then, if we wonder, "Where does such a principle originate?" our perception widens. We can choose to believe it originates in human nature purely on a biological level, like a thermostat; or we can see it as implying a connection to some force beyond the human, a transpersonal random cosmic force; or we can imagine yet a connection to a superhuman intelligent source or divinity.

The Self, however we imagine it, might extend beyond a personal consciousness to include all of human consciousness and all that lies beyond us. But does Jung's "Self" make sense any longer? Not everyone is comfortable thinking in such grand terms as "universal principles." Self could be simply a chance consequence of evolution causing humans to create sensible stories that tie experiences together meaningfully, even though there is no reasonable order "out there." Rather than having a blueprint for our development as a person, the Self might merely keep adapting to whatever we choose to be at the moment.

A lot happened in the century after Jung made the idea of individuation his motif. Up and down, in and out, good and bad, male and female—designations like those would not stay in place, raising suspicions about an ordering principle. Sounds of the Big Bang were detected by scientists but denied by anti-scientists who question the reality of research. The moon was brought down to earth. We discovered how to make life in a lab and also how to wipe the world away utterly and in a flash. Kingdoms, forests, and languages were deconstructed. Cameras were swallowed, showing us enemies we hid inside ourselves. Brain scans revealed infants' intrauterine conversations with their mothers. Women wore their underwear on the outside, and men took off their armor and tucked it inside. Physicists trying to form consistent theories about the universe became more and more confused and entangled. The philosopher says we killed God, but the priest says he hears Something laughing. It is hard to tell our children what's what!

Jung thought that human nature was shaped by the Self acting within each personality and that our individuation occurred when we became conscious of cooperating with the Self. Being in touch with the Self would keep a person feeling whole, as opposed to feeling fragmented; it would be a source of stability as well as creative energy in the face of outer disorganization. My purpose here is to clarify the idea

of individuation; even if we have no background in psychology or philosophy, each of us can decide if it survives the chaos of contemporary thought. May the spirit of W.B. Yeats help us! The poet wrote:

Hands, do what you're bid:
Bring the balloon of the mind
That bellies and drags in the wind
Into its narrow shed.

So let us bring our balloon minds to the task, trying to tie to earth airy words and ideas.

Jung was deliberately vague in his description of the nature of the process so as to avoid too literal interpretations. He did not want to encourage "recipes" or oversimplified directions for what had to be a particularly unique process for each one of us.

In simplest form, individuation means choosing to be conscious, or mindful, and especially, it means becoming conscious of the person we are capable of being in our fullness, our strengths, and our limitations.

Is the concept of a process of individuation relevant in the 21st century? Some look into the chaos and say, "No, it is not; a principle of order seems to be missing from too many lives." Others say, "Yes, even in times of chaos, life continues to try to heal into harmony."

Probably as in all metaphysical questions, both are true: Life is—or has—meaning and meaninglessness. I cherish the anxious hope that meaning will preponderate and win the battle. (Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p. 359.)

Perhaps after reading this you will be better able to decide that for yourself. If it is relevant, what is individuation now and what does the Self want for or from you?

Avoiding Recipes, Accepting Responsibility

In his autobiography, Jung describes his first reaction to reading alchemical texts: “Good Lord, what nonsense! This stuff is impossible to understand!” (Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p. 204.)

I had a similar reaction to my first Jungian lecture, and I see in the way listeners’ eyes glaze over at some Jungian presentations that it’s not unusual to respond to Jungian thought this way in the beginning. A frequent criticism of Jung’s writing is that he delves into obscure stuff, such as alchemy, that is not current and practical. What’s important to keep in mind is that later Jung realized the alchemists were thinking in symbols and describing the individuation process as they imagined it; he saw the momentous value of what was being conveyed and found it exciting. As Jung stuck with studying alchemy, I stuck with studying Jung in spite of that first reaction. I hope you will stick with this too, as I will try to present the idea of individuation so as to minimize confusion.

It is crucial that we do not confuse *individuation* and *individualism*. The “know thyself” of Socrates does not translate to “It’s all about Me!” Individuation implies something other than maturation, good self-esteem, good adjustment, success, or fame. It involves restructuring the mind.

As individuals, these are times of mixed messages about what is of value, messages that come from such a variety of influences—from the markets of pop culture, health gurus, spiritual growth advisors, and religious institutions, even from the army: Be all that you can be! Every few months a new book catches hold of the public imagination, and millions of us throng to acquire it and the knowledge that will give us the “purposeful life,” the “secret” of life, the ten things that will make us make something of ourselves. How do we determine which paths to follow in becoming the person we are meant to be? Where should we put our energies and effort? Are there goals that will stand up to the vagaries of changing times and the aging process? Should we aim for

balance or passion, for stability or adaptability? Should I spend time and money analyzing myself or just take a pill and buy a new car?

There are similarities in many of these messages, and I will be trying to explain why I chose Jung's method to follow for myself. It is not the only way. Try to keep an open mind and remember that wise people have been thinking and speaking about these things forever. Of course, as my philosopher friend Bill Brenner says, "If your mind is too open, nothing can stay in it," so you are entitled to an opinion!

Step one: Become aware of the possibility of a relationship to the Self—as if the Self were an intelligible entity—and learn to speak with it. How? Theoretically the Self has access to our unconscious thoughts and feelings, while our egos know only our conscious thoughts and feelings. Through unexpected meetings with the unconscious processes, this unknown part of nature can be identified and engaged. This does not mean that we listen to some inner voice and obey anything it asks. I am speaking about having a conversation, even at times a debate with the Self.

There is a very practical reason for listening to our unconscious in the form of dreams and intuitions. As they connect us to unknown parts of ourselves, they can be life-savers. A friend dreamed that she was attacked in the chest with a foreign object. Since she was experiencing some mild changes in pulse rate, the dream spurred her on to have herself checked. Tests showed that she had a serious growth on her heart. Her condition was corrected by surgery, but, had it been ignored, probably would have killed her. Often a dream will warn you about a physical condition before your waking mind is aware of it.

Intuition sometimes warns us of dangers—dangerous decisions, people, and situations—that we would otherwise overlook. We can probably remember times when we had a warning feeling about someone who did prove to be untrustworthy or dangerous. We can't be sure of such intuitions—they can be wrong—but we should pay attention and check them out.

A patient was thrilled and yet uncomfortable (his intuition) about the pious woman he was in love with. She seemed to be in love with him too, so he couldn't understand why he was anxious. Then a dream supported his intuition: he dreamed that she was driving them recklessly. The car was heading for a cliff when he woke in a panic. Sobered from his state of infatuated elation, he began to ask more questions and

be more realistic about her values. He found that despite her reputation as a religious person, she was quite impulsive, had been dishonest about her accomplishments and, in fact, had a history of treating people destructively.

Besides dreams and intuitions, we become aware of the Self and the unconscious by paying attention to our strong passions and attractions, but also our uncomfortable feelings and reactions, like fear, jealousy, irritations, hatreds, envy, and physical symptoms—not just noticing them, but questioning their source. Why does this person's manner evoke a rage in me that has no reasonable explanation? What aspect of me does that person represent? Why do I always get a headache on Saturday morning? To seriously examine the question is to look at *why* we feel as we do, and not to automatically dismiss an experience as chance or say, "Because it's *true*." "Because he *is* annoying!" "It's a coincidence." "That's just the way I am."

Being in touch with the Self can affect your mental and physical health and can prevent your hiding from yourself and placing blame on others.

But beyond our own personal well-being, is the concept of individuation important for the human species? Jung feared that we as a human race were heading toward an impending catastrophe. He thought that by evolving psychologically we might be able to avoid and/or survive the threatening apocalypse, the collapse of civilized life. Jung is not alone in his concern about human survival. In an online essay about the development of intelligent life in the universe, the physicist Stephen Hawking said, "I shall take this to include the human race, even though much of its behaviour through out history has been pretty stupid, and not calculated to aid the survival of the species." (Hawking, "Life in the Universe," January, 2009.) Raising human consciousness is the key to making life on earth survivable, thought Jung.

The survival of the race as we know it is of questionable value. We are potentially capable of destroying our own planet and others. We are potentially capable of programming ourselves into cyborgs. Some consider the expanding human population to be a blight or virus on the earth, a failed experiment. Let us not debate this here, but assume that many of us wish that humans will survive, if not improve in our humanity.

Some argue that Jung is the most important psychologist of our century in that he pointed us to the *creative powers* that lie in the universal pool of knowledge in which we all participate. These creative powers are what we will either call on to rescue us from utter destruction of the race, or abandon along with humanity itself, or at least acknowledge as our companions in facing the unknown. Jung used the phrase “collective psyche.” It means essentially “the information present in the human race as a whole”—that information stored in our DNA, our memories, our brains, our cells, our instincts, and our common images and languages. “Collective unconscious,” “objective psyche,” and “collective psyche” are Jung’s terms that all mean the same thing, the sum total of the human race’s psychological experience.

The ability to learn from history is something we have often been too absorbed with ourselves to do. The connection with previous ages, with previous civilizations and empires, with our ancestors, with nature, and with future possibilities, all available to us in the collective psyche if we could only listen, would help our survival. This is a subject dear to many thoughtful scholars, a recent example being Jared Diamond. In his book, *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*, Diamond illustrates the effect of unconsciousness on the fate of many specific extinct civilizations. With attention to civilizations before us, we could be more enlightened about cultures and peoples of the world today, and about how our values interact.

More than that, Jung gave us a reason to believe that each of us is a participant in the cosmic creation responsible for adding to the consciousness of the universe. Perhaps each of us, by coming to know our own relationship to Self, contributes to the pool of consciousness in the universe. Each of us capable of understanding this has a responsibility for the evolution of mindfulness.

For example, when I think “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth,” I think only about my personal pride. It is a leap of consciousness to realize that pure vengeance is a dead end. There were conditions when an attitude of dog-eat-dog, survival-at-any-cost, made sense. Information and resources were limited and strangers were a threat. But the world has shrunk and the human family is closely contained and connected; a different attitude is called for. Refusal to take revenge means thinking beyond mere pride in physical survival and seeing a larger picture that includes respecting the rights of others. If I take that leap, I begin to see

something more useful in negotiating than in destroying my enemy. It is possible that that bit of increased consciousness contributes to the consciousness of the whole, as each drop of water contributes to the sea.

Being curious—about your neighbor's welfare, your nation's policies toward the rest of the world, the welfare of other animal species and ecological systems, the condition of the planet—raises the level of consciousness of the whole by a little bit. This theme is explored in many art forms; see for example, the recent movies "Freedom Writers" and "Crash." In both movies the subjects of the stories were provoked to see beyond their personal needs into a larger worldview and an expansion of their capacity for compassion.

Early Greece produced plays that reflected such growth in awareness. Dionysus, the god of the renewal, symbolized by the grapevine, presided over many aspects of nature, including intoxication and madness. In early times he was celebrated with wild, drunken orgies, but as Greek civilization advanced and turned violence into art, the celebrations of Dionysus evolved into festivals of theatre. In their dramas the playwrights showed how generations of one family could be dominated by envy, vengeance, and murder, until an evolution of consciousness resulted in a system of justice. The patricides, fratricides, sacrificing of children, and slaying of enemies was replaced by a sense of restraint that allowed cooler heads to judge what was deemed fair. The Greeks gave credit to the gods for teaching them the advanced attitudes. Now we would say humans advance in consciousness through the awareness of potential benefits to all, through being Self-centric instead of egocentric.

These concerns, these everyday problems that we might bring to therapy, or the larger issues of the welfare of our species, are understandable. But what of timeless, transpersonal goals, the ultimate purposes of existence? Some psychologists feel this is a valid subject of psychology. Others do not. They criticize Jung for discussing psychology in relation to anthropology, religion, physics, astrology, sociology, literature, and so on. Most psychologists and therapists accept the physical and psychological dimensions of his ideas, but many do not accept the transcendent dimension, or at least do not think it a proper subject for psychology.

When we consider a transcendent dimension, we enlarge the psychological to include a sacred dimension. Some believe that Jung showed us that the ultimate goal of human psychological development is to find our place within a cosmic unity. He thought the physical and psychological, matter and mind, humans and nature, make up one, holistic reality. Within that cosmic unity is our image of a god. Perhaps God is not dead, but our image of God is changing. In that case, instead of blindly accepting an image of the divine from outside sources, such as a religious dogma, we would be actually responsible for changing our image of God by meeting and having dialogue with the Self.

For Jung, by becoming aware of a relationship with the Self, each individual is not abandoned to suffer the existential emptiness of individualism, but ultimately finds in his individual soul the presence of a whole universe and a relationship to its timelessness. We could come to discover and transform aspects of a spiritual presence in us through our own efforts to communicate with the Self. Some psychologists believe that the transcendent dimension could help us survive by creating a more tolerant and less selfish society. We could step outside of our personal values and see into the holiness of all of creation. We could feel connected to and responsible for all of creation.

But positing a transcendent dimension raises another issue. A conscious, unified universe can result from an intelligence that resides in man alone, or it can be the result of an intelligence that comes from a source beyond human consciousness. Analytical Psychology, as Jung's model of psychology is called, allows both a secular and a sacred character. Both presuppose a dimension of reality that is conscious, but one presumes that that consciousness is purposeful and intelligent.

The feeling that the Self is "other" opens the possibility that the "other" is a product of human consciousness alone, a secular theory; or the "other" may be a consciousness beyond the human, a divine intelligence, a spiritual theory. Secular and spiritual theories are more than just names. They result in different human behavior. A secular society seeks information and understanding and reduces anxiety through knowing. A spiritual society seeks mystery and reduces anxiety by not needing to know.

Secular humanism values human life and dignity and finds in those values enough reason to live a decent and even altruistic life without calling on the idea of divinity to support it. It does not require a rela-

tionship with the spiritual dimension to justify its values and does not support religious expressions of spirituality.

One of the assets of Jung's theory is that no one is obliged to accept the transcendent or spiritual dimension, but neither are we prohibited from including it as some ideologies would demand. For example, Freud considered the need for a spiritual life a weakness, wishful thinking, a defense against anxiety. Marxism denigrates religion, "the opiate of the masses," believing that it weakens rather than strengthens the validity of the community. According to Marx, religions reflect an unhealthy superstition which undermines pragmatic social action. In contrast to these theories, Jung believed that any psychological experience was worth studying seriously. He posited a religious instinct as part of the natural psyche and believed that many of the ills of today were the result of our having lost touch with our deep spiritual resources. We don't know if Jung believed that the Self extends beyond the human dimension. He may have been agnostic, or an atheist. What he believed is not relevant; he urged each of us to find our inner truth. In Analytical Psychology we are invited to explore the spiritual dimension.

In the secular understanding, the Self is a hypothetical construct, a working concept that can be explained on a biological level. It can be seen simply as a description of the way the human mind works without implying anything about the existence of things spiritual. There is much to be learned from Jung on a level of psychological theory, so that if you are a humanist or atheist you can find meaning there. The universe may be a vast being, evolving without a plan but steered by human intelligence.

The Self can also imply the existence of a dimension of reality that is intelligent and purposeful and that is not produced by human physical and cultural movements—in fact, is independent of human nature and, therefore, sacred. Those who imagine the Self this way experience it as divine and might give it images and names of gods, goddesses, or other divine figures. They can picture themselves in constant intimate union with this divinity or separate, emotionally detached, and respectful of it.

In either case, there is no point outside of the psyche from which to view the psyche, so there is no scientific answer to the question of whether a transcendent dimension exists. Even if we imagine a divine being responsible for the universe, humanists would point out that that

does not provide any answers as to the origin of the divine. Either approach ends in mystery. Jung imagined that there could be some way of answering the question at some distant time in our evolution and that physics might advance to find such an answer.

This discussion of Jung's contribution to the survival of the species is not meant to imply that Jung's is the only message that can support our survival or that he alone is a messiah of psychological awareness. We will consider how his way of describing development is consistent with some other paths to fulfillment, and how it differs from some as well.



The life of Buddha is an example of individuation. He was privileged and enjoyed every possible means of comfort and pleasure, sheltered from want. What moved him to want to experience the world beyond his palace? He went into the world of ordinary people and found sickness, poverty, and suffering. It seemed he felt his life was not complete until he had experienced the dark and sordid side of life. Only then could he fulfill his destiny as a spiritual sage. His life illustrates the idea that we are not completed by being good or by having what seems like perfection. Individuation as completion means filling out all of our possible conscious experiences and being aware of our potential, the pleasant and unpleasant, good and bad.

Part III

Lagniappe



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A Question of Principle

Part I began with that attitude of inquiry from an alchemist, and Part II ended with similar thoughts from a prominent physicist, Richard Feynman.

Although many of us do not know of any purpose we might have in the universe and do not find that thought frightening, we are free to conjecture, imagine, and believe for the pure joy of imagining.

Some who have considered the possibility of finding meaning in the universe conclude that they must say their “ironic goodnight to sacred order.” (Philip Rieff, quoted in Gundry, *Beyond Psyche: Symbol and Transcendence in C.G. Jung*, p. 18.) Doubters such as Rieff, and Richard Dawkins present impressive arguments against meaning.

Others think that order is built into the human brain, and not “out there.” “Universal themes of religion are not learned. They merge as accidental by-products of our mental systems. They are part of human nature,” says Yale research psychologist Paul Bloom. (Bloom, “Is God an Accident?” p. 4.)

Neither epistemology nor scientific research can be exempt from the charges of subjectivity, its confines, limits, and biases. If there is no point outside of the human condition from which to view reality, is there any answer to nihilism? Is there such a thing as truth? Yes, say many who believe that continued conversation between disciplines advances understanding, even without a permanent background of “reality” to steady us. We do not need to subscribe to a naïve view of “truth” in order to make distinctions between degrees of truth. Every language-game, discipline, and philosophy, including those which support nihilism or atheism, holds to a standard of truth and a principle of order to communicate its principles.

The methods of the hard-sciences are not often useful for psychological inquiry. Efforts are being made to find appropriate ways of research-

ing the subtleties in the humanities. Post-enlightenment hermeneutics allows an appreciation of scholarly research into art, history, politics, psychology, and the like, to convey truths to the degree that they contribute relevance to our lives. A recent discussion of these issues can be found in Mark Gundry's answer to the "hermeneutics of suspicion." (Gundry, *Beyond Psyche*.)

Jung never answered the question of whether he believed in a divine presence. He did once say in an interview, when asked if he believed, "I do not believe, I know." ("Face to Face: Professor Jung," British Broadcasting Corporation, 1959.) That has been subjected to mixed interpretations. One interpretation notes that he could have been speaking as an empiricist who knew through observation of the archetypal world, or as a Gnostic knows by examining his inner world, or knowing metaphorically, always leaving ambiguity in his responses, while he calculatedly did not admit to belief.

Late in life Jung wrote, "There is nothing I am quite sure about. I have no definite convictions—not about anything, really." (Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p. 358.) Ambiguity about aspects of the psyche that span the territory of the psychological and mystical is not uncommon, as Sanford Drob notes in describing his extensive research of the Kabbalah and its relationship to Analytical Psychology.

Jung should be applauded for his intuitive recognition that only an ambiguous and paradoxical language can express certain matters regarding the psyche that cannot be expressed in either/or, linear form...the kabbalists and Hasidim (as do mystics of many traditions) refuse to make sharp distinctions between the outer and inner, the macrocosm and microcosm, the transcendent and the immanent, and the theological and the psychological, holding that such distinctions sever a primal unity and plunge one hopelessly into a (practically necessary, but) illusory world of dichotomous thinking and experience. (Drob, "Jung's Kabbalistic Visions," p. 49.)

John Dourley has noted that Jung's later writings leave no doubt of his non-dualist thought, compatible with Eastern religions. That is, Jung understands, as do the mystics, that the ego has access to humanity's native divinity in the depths of the unconscious. Such access to numinous experiences is both individual and universal. (Dourley, "Response to Barbara Stephens," pp. 479-492.)

Quite early in his career (1916), Jung wrote privately for his friends a kind of poem, in the style of ancient alchemists, which describes a view of the construction of the order of the entire cosmos. It can be thought of as a fantasy of a spiritual Self beyond the human level of being. These excerpts are from sermons one and three:

The Nothing or fullness, is called by us the Pleroma. In it thinking and being cease, because the eternal is without qualities...

If the Pleroma were capable of having a being, Abraxas would be its manifestation.

Although he is activity itself, he is not a particular result but result in general.

He is active non-reality because he has no definite result.

He is still a created being inasmuch as he is differentiated from the Pleroma.

For he is power, endurance, change.

Man sees the summum bonum of the sun and also the infimum malum of the devil,

but Abraxas he does not see, for he is indefinable life itself, which is the mother of good and evil alike.

This version is published in Hoeller. (Hoeller, *The Gnostic Jung and the Seven Sermons to the Dead*.) "Seven Sermons to the Dead" is also found as an appendix in Jung's autobiography, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*.

Avoiding Recipes, Accepting Responsibility

As a therapist I continually witness evolution of consciousness in individual lives. I would like to believe that this shows that human consciousness not only can, but is, evolving, and that we can look forward to becoming a more intelligent, humane, and tolerant species. But it does not necessarily follow. Anthropologists have not agreed on whether substantial changes have evolved in the innate capacity for thought of human beings through the ages. "Emerging" and "unfolding," without putting a value of "getting better" on our development, describes more of what contemporary thinkers can agree to. We are suspicious about goals, teleologies, and anything smacking of hierarchical progress. Jungian thought tends toward being teleological, even though Jung was nondogmatic about using the term "teleology." (Nagy, *Philosophical Issues in the Psychology of C.G. Jung*, p. 263.)

All we can say is that things happen as if there were a fixed final aim. In psychology one ought to be wary of believing absolutely in causality as of an absolute belief in teleology. ("The Relations Between the Ego and the Unconscious," CW 7, par. 501.)

• • •

In *Science of the Soul*, Edinger employed the image of three dimensions in reference to the therapist as medical person, philosopher, and priest. I find the image of three dimensions a convenient system of organizing approaches to psychological material. This three-dimensional approach allows space for a positivistic psychology, a humanistic and phenomenological psychology, and a spiritual psychology. The psychiatrist and philosopher, Maurice Nicoll, a colleague of Jung and student of philosopher Gurdjieff, used this concept of three dimensions to describe levels of psychic depth. These divisions also correspond to Jung's three stages of coniunctio in the alchemical individuation process, explicated

in Part II, Chapter 9, as follows: 1) Unio Mentalis; 2) Re-union of body, soul, and spirit; and 3) Unus Mundus.

The collective unconscious is sometimes called the “objective psyche.” It is at the heart of Jung’s work to recognize that we feel we are in charge of our minds and souls, but our minds and souls are also beyond us; they contain contents that we do not control, that feel as if they come from outside, so they are “the objects” of our interest and attention. Edward Edinger says that the objective psyche sees you as its object, which gives meaning to the well-known symbol of the “Eye of God,” which sees us. The “Eye of God” is an example of an archetypal image which can be positive or negative, depending on the interpretation given it by the person receiving the image. One person feels the seeing god to be benevolently watching over them; another feels persecuted by the continual, suspicious spy in the sky.

I was interested to see that this idea that we are not just subjects of thought, but objects of thought, has reached popular culture and public acceptance, as noted in James Wood’s piece in *The New Yorker*, “The Unforgotten.” Wood wrote:

...a good portion of reality consists of what we freely imagine; and then, less happily perhaps, we discover that that reality has imagined us—that we are the vassals of our imaginings, not their emperors or archdukes. (Wood, “The Unforgotten,” p. 83.)

To begin studying Jung, it is helpful to know that he drew a diagram to illustrate the structure of the unconscious. As described by C. Michael Smith: The lowest level he called the “central fire,” a cosmic source of energy that penetrates all the other layers. Next was the layer of animal ancestry, then the layer of primeval ancestry, and above this a layer representing the psychical deposits and structures of large cultural groups, all interconnected. These comprise the deep layers of archetypal images which form the patterns of human behavior. The higher layers were more specific to the culture and the individual. They included the layer of nation, then the layer of family, and finally the layer of the individual. In special states of consciousness the archaic layers, which are normally operating unconsciously, can be activated. The imagery produced usually is felt to be numinous and compelling. (Smith, *Jung and Shamanism in Dialogue*, p. 105.)

Aspects of this kind of layered diagram can be detected in designs, photography, alchemical texts, and art objects throughout the world. It is stimulating to play with such images on one's own, to find ways of depicting the inner life as one experiences it, as a form of active imagination and individuation. The concept of a collective unconscious that can potentially be identified by physiological research has its supporters in psychobiology as well as its skeptics and detractors. It is a developing concept in Analytical Psychology.

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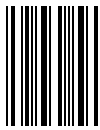
Many university professors are not allowed to teach Jungian psychology. Secular humanism and positivism have shaped the academic worldview; therefore, investigation into the unknown or unfamiliar dimensions of human experience is not valued. But this attitude contrasts with the positive reputation Jung enjoys among therapists, artists of all types, and philosophers. Those without resistance to the unconscious because of their creativity, open-mindedness, or personal disposition are more likely to receive Jung's explorations without prejudice or ideological resistance. There is a lively conversation going on about Jung's ideas in journals and conferences among diverse groups of thinkers which does not reach mainstream psychology. *Becoming* is for those whose minds are receptive to the unknown, and to help some of us to think—more with respect than dread—of the possibility that we act unconsciously.

Deldon Anne McNeely received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Louisiana State University and is a member of the International Association for Analytical Psychology. A senior analyst of the Inter-Regional Society of Jungian Analysts, she is a training analyst for their New Orleans Jungian Seminar. Publications include *Touching: Body Therapy and Depth Psychology*; *Animus Aeternus: Exploring the Inner Masculine*; and *Mercury Rising: Women, Evil, and the Trickster Gods*.

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